

Invitation to submit comments on Bill 36-03 by January 16

Dear friend:

On October 21, Councilmembers Knapp, Subin, and Leventhal introduced Bill 36-03, *Fire and Rescue Services – Amendments*, which would revise certain aspects of the fire and rescue service. The sponsors emphasized that the bill is intended to achieve several goals, including: increase integration of the public and private components of the County Fire and Rescue Service, update emergency incident management systems to reflect new or elevated threats to public safety, and improve benefits awarded to volunteer fire and rescue workers under the Length of Service Award Program.

Community interest in this bill is high, and the Council has already received a great deal of correspondence about it. At a public hearing on November 18, fire and rescue organizations, other community organizations, and unaffiliated individuals expressed a variety of perspectives on the bill. Although those who testified generally did not recommend specific revisions to the bill's text, several organizations and individuals requested an opportunity to provide specific changes for Council consideration.

The Council's Public Safety Committee will conduct a detailed review of the bill to develop recommendations for the Council. After that, the entire Council will review the Committee's recommendations. It is important to remember that revisions may be considered at any time before the Council votes, and, if the bill is enacted, the final version may differ from the version that was introduced.

As part of its review, the Public Safety Committee wants to be sure that all organizations and individuals have had every opportunity to offer specific suggestions and alternatives. If you or your organization wish to recommend amendments to Bill 36-03, we encourage you to do so **in writing** (by letter or email to the Council at county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov) by **January 16**. For reference, a copy the bill is available on-line at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/2003bills/36-03.pdf, or you can receive a paper copy by calling (240) 777-7910.

After January 16, the Public Safety Committee will hold a worksession to begin to review any comments we receive. We will schedule additional worksessions as needed. For scheduling information check on-line at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/-csltmpl.asp?url=/content/council/agenda2003.asp, or call the phone number in the previous paragraph.

On behalf of the County Council, we want to thank everyone who has taken the time to share their views about Bill 36-03 with us. We look forward to receiving additional comments about the content of the bill in the near future.

Sincerely,

Phil Andrews, Chair
Public Safety Committee

Michael Knapp, Lead Member for Fire and Rescue Services

Michael L. Subin, Member